Amendments to the Drawings:

Attached is a copy of drawing Fig. 3 with a red ink marking showing proposed changes to the drawing in this application for which approval of the Examiner is requested.

Per the Examiner's suggestion, Fig. 3 has been amended to change the lower occurrence of reference number 148 to reference number 146.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application in view of the present amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

A proposed drawing amendment is included with this amendment. The proposed drawing amendment proposes to change the lower occurrence of reference number 148 to reference number 146, per the Examiner's suggestion.

This amendment also amends claims 2-4, 9, 12, 13, and 17, cancels claims 1, 5-8, 10, and 11, and adds new claims 18 and 19. Claims 2-4, 9, and 12 now depend from independent claim 18. Claims 14-17 and new claim 19 depend from amended claim 13.

Claim 13, as amended, recites that the valve housing of the fill valve including a plurality of fingers having inwardly bent end portions. The fingers define a valve chamber in which the valve member is located. The valve member when located in a first position in the valve chamber, adjacent the end portions of the fingers, enables flow of the fluid through the fill passage of the valve housing into a fluid chamber of the inflator. The valve member when located in a second position in the valve chamber prevents the flow of fluid out of the fluid chamber through the fill passage.

None of the cited references teaches or suggests a valve housing of a fill valve that includes a plurality of fingers having inwardly bent end portions which define a valve chamber in which the valve member is located. Since none of the cited

references teaches or suggests the features of the fill valve of claim 13, allowance of claim 13 is respectfully requested.

Claims 14-17 and 19 depend from amended claim 13 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 13. Additionally, claims 14-17 and 19 are allowable for the specific limitations of each claim.

Specifically, claim 19 recites that the fill passage of the fill valve includes first and second tapered portions with a large diameter portion and a small diameter portion interposed between the first and second tapered portions. None of the cited references includes a fill passage having the features set forth in claim 19. Therefore, allowance of claim 19 is respectfully requested.

New claim 18 recites an inflator that comprises a tubular body portion having axially spaced first and second ends. An igniter endcap is secured to the first end of the tubular body portion and a diffuser endcap is secured to the second end of the tubular body portion. The tubular body portion, the igniter endcap, and the diffuser endcap collectively define a fluid chamber. First and second passages extend through the diffuser endcap. A burst disk closes the first passage in the diffuser endcap. A fluid is stored under pressure in the fluid chamber. The inflator also comprises an igniter that is supported by the igniter endcap and is spaced axially away from the burst disk. The igniter is actuatable for opening the burst disk for enabling fluid to flow out of the fluid chamber through the first passage. A fill valve has a valve housing and a valve member that is movable relative to the

valve housing. The valve housing is received in the second passage of the diffuser endcap and defines a fill passage for enabling fluid flow into the fluid chamber. The valve member, when located in a first position relative to the valve housing, enables the flow of the fluid through the fill passage into the fluid chamber. The valve member, when located in a second position relative to the valve housing, prevents fluid flow out of the fluid chamber through the fill passage.

Claim 18 patentably defines over the cited prior art. Specifically none of the cited references teaches or suggests an inflator that comprises a tubular body portion, an igniter endcap, and a diffuser endcap that collectively define a fluid chamber and in which, first and second passages extend through the diffuser endcap. The first passage is closed by a burst disk and the fill valve is received in the second passage. The Office Action, in rejecting previous claim 7, combined the teachings of Erike, U.S. Patent No. 6,173,495, and Schotthoefer et al., U.S. Patent No. 3,895,821, for providing first and second flow passages in a diffuser endcap. A combination of Erike and Schottoefer et al. fails to teach or suggest a diffuser endcap of an inflator into which first and second flow passages extend.

In rejecting previous claim 7, the Examiner relied upon a teaching in Schotthoefer et al. that a gas inlet means 36 may be located in different positions of a gas containing means 12. (Col. 3, lines 43-47). Schotthoefer et al., however, teaches that a conduit 50 that provides a passage for gas to

exit the inflator 10 and that is sealed by sealing means 26 is located in a gas releasing means 22. (Col. 4, lines 40-57). Schotthoefer et al. only teaches locating the inlet means 36 for receiving the ball check valve 40 in the gas containing means 12. Schotthoefer et al. fails to teach or suggest that the inlet means 36 may be located in the gas releasing means 22, which is a separate structure than the gas containing means 12. Thus, Schotthoefer et al. specifically teaches locating the passage through which inflation fluid exits the inflator and the passage for receiving the ball check valve on different structures of the inflator. Therefore, a combination of Erike and Schottoefer et al. fails to teach or suggest the diffuser endcap of claim 18 and allowance of claim 18 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4, 9, and 12 depend from claim 18 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 18. Additionally, claims 2-4, 9, and 12 are allowable for the specific limitations of each claim.

Specifically, claim 3 recites that the second passage extends radially through the diffuser endcap, relative to a longitudinal axis of the tubular body portion of the inflator. None of the cited references teaches or suggests a passage for receiving a fill valve that extends radially through the diffuser endcap. Therefore, allowance of claim 3 is respectfully requested.

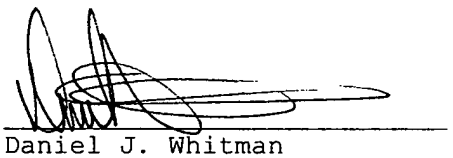
Claim 12 recites that the valve housing defines a valve chamber. A plurality of fingers having inwardly bent end portions defines the valve chamber. The valve member is

located in the valve chamber and is movable toward the inwardly bent end portions of the fingers for enabling the flow of fluid into the fluid chamber of the inflator. None of the cited references teaches or suggests a plurality of fingers having inwardly bent end portions that define a valve chamber of a fill valve. Therefore, allowance of claim 12 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified patent application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified patent application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,



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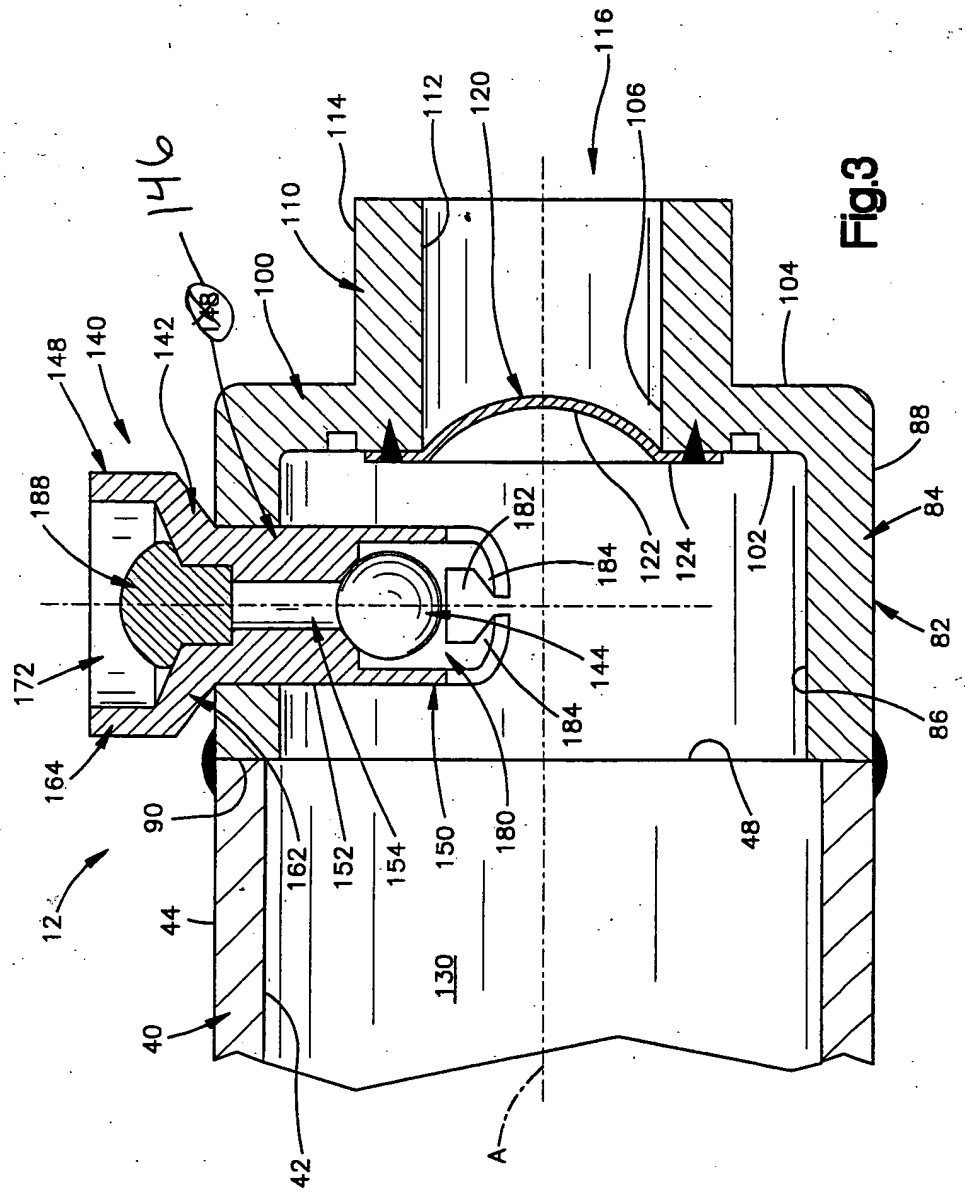

Fig.3